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ABSTRACT

The suggestions presented in this publication are designed to assist principals in improving school effectiveness through a well-planned, well-executed program of staff supervision and curriculum development. The document is organized into four major areas. First, the need for the principal to provide strong curriculum leadership through establishing achievement as a top priority, actively participating in curriculum committees, and establishing nonbiased student evaluations is addressed. Second, suggestions are made as to how a principal can communicate high expectations for student and teacher performance through encouraging and rewarding excellence, monitoring instruction and conducting staff evaluations, and supporting staff development. Next, how to encourage equity and excellence through administrative procedures such as reviewing scheduling and grouping procedures and establishing an orderly atmosphere is discussed. And finally, ways that a principal can help to maintain a positive school climate through encouraging teachers to communicate with parents and encouraging parent participation are considered. A "self-assessment" scale and a "priority for improvement" scale for each item in the four areas facilitate use of the material for planning purposes. (CMG)

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1. The Effective Principal:

- ☐ provides strong curriculum leadership
- ☐ communicates high expectations for teacher and student performance
- ☐ introduces administrative procedures to encourage equity and excellence
- ☐ mobilizes community resources to help maintain a positive school climate
- ☑ all of the above

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The Effective Principal: Achieving Equity and Excellence in Schools

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

1. How can a principal provide strong curriculum leadership? 6
   - Establish achievement as a top priority
   - Actively participate in curriculum committees
   - Establish nonbiased student evaluations

2. How can a principal communicate high expectations for teacher and student performance? 9
   - Encourage and reward excellence
   - Monitor instruction and conduct staff evaluations
   - Support staff development

3. What administrative procedures encourage equity and excellence? 12
   - Review scheduling and grouping procedures
   - Establish an orderly school atmosphere

4. How can a principal mobilize community resources to help maintain a positive school climate? 15
   - Encourage teachers to communicate with parents
   - Encourage ongoing parent involvement

Concluding Remarks 16

Reference Notes 17

INTRODUCTION

In the past many educators and researchers concluded that student achievement depended on family background rather than on where a student went to school. New research makes it clear that schools do make a difference. High achievement can be directly linked to the quality of the school climate. And researchers are now able to tell us what factors characterize these effective schools. A primary factor is the strong leadership of the school principal. This is demonstrated by emphasis on curriculum improvement along with high expectations for both teachers and students (Crain, Mahard and Narot, 1981; Cross, 1981; Carney, 1979 a,b,c,d; Edmonds, 1979; Gottfredson and Daiger, 1979; Forehand and Ragosta, 1976; St. John, 1975; and Turnage, 1972).

The suggestions presented in this publication are designed to assist principals in improving school effectiveness through a well-planned, well-executed program of staff supervision and curriculum development. These suggestions are based on a careful review and synthesis of educational research from two sources: the literature on effective schools and the literature on equity in education. Through this synthesis we have formulated a research-based strategy list designed to assist educators in providing effective education for all students.

As you review the information below you will become aware of two factors underlying all statements. First, the principal needs to be involved in all school activities: setting goals, establishing high expectations, participating in the work of curriculum committees, developing instructional programs, attending staff development programs and monitoring instruction. And second, the principal cannot create an effective school alone. The active support of the entire staff, student body and community is necessary.

"The Effective Principal" is organized into four major areas:

- providing strong curriculum leadership
- communicating high expectations for all teachers and students
- developing administrative procedures that encourage equity and excellence
- mobilizing community resources

To use this as a planning document, principals should read each item and indicate how successfully it is being implemented in their schools according to the scale in column 1. In column 2, principals indicate the priority of this goal for improvement.

1. How can a principal provide strong curriculum leadership?

There are three major areas in which effective principals demonstrate curriculum leadership: (1) establishing student achievement as a top priority, (2) actively participating in curriculum committees, and (3) initiating nonbiased student evaluations.

In the first column, circle the appropriate numeral to indicate the extent to which you have succeeded in implementing the following goals. In column 2, circle the numeral which expresses your opinion on how important a priority for improvement you consider this to be.

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Establishing student achievement as a top priority.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— With the entire faculty (or by departments at the secondary level) develop a mission statement that emphasizes the importance of encouraging the achievement of all students.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Develop measurable goals and common performance objectives for all students and teachers based upon the stated, agreed-upon mission.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Collect, analyze, utilize and disseminate data on student enrollments and achievement to use as a basis for educational programming.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Establishing and actively participating in curriculum committees whose tasks include:	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Identification of learning objectives	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Development of procedures to assure that curriculum is multicultural	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Selection and review (for equity, quality and multicultural emphasis) of all instructional materials	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Planning program development and curriculum modifications	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Reviewing and exploring instructional strategies for effective teaching with diverse school populations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Identifying successful and unsuccessful instructional programs and activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Instituting a system of nonbiased evaluation of student performance.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— With faculty and staff members, design an overall evaluation system to assess the degree to which curriculum objectives are attained.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Provide in-service training to assist all teachers in understanding the negative effects of labeling; in identifying race and sex bias in testing and counseling procedures; and in exploring various grouping practices.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Ensure that student evaluation procedures are non-discriminatory, multifaceted and not solely dependent on standardized tests. Base educational decisions upon student profiles that include parent, student and teacher recommendations as well as classroom tests and interest inventories.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Establish a policy that assures periodic reassessment of placement decisions. Encourage and support appropriate changes in student placement.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Clearly inform students about the purpose of each standardized and classroom test and be sure that students are trained in test-taking skills.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Provide alternative mechanisms for testing students of limited English-speaking ability. Several tests (e.g., Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, and Group Inventory for Finding Creative Talent) are published in Spanish. Some school systems maintain lists of people who can translate into a student's native language.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

2. How can a principal communicate high expectations for the performance of all teachers and students?

Principals' expectations can have a positive effect on the performance of both teachers and students. Research indicates that expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Principals have a responsiblity to act in ways that communicate high expectations, that convince teachers and students that they can meet standards of excellence. To communicate high expectations principals should emphasize the positive, encourage and reward excellence, monitor instruction and conduct staff evaluations.

In the first column, circle the appropriate numeral to indicate the extent to which you have succeeded in implementing the following goals. In column 2, circle the numeral which expresses your opinion on how important a priority for improvement you consider this to be.

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Encouraging and rewarding excellence.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Emphasize the positive by frequently stating your belief that:										
• All students can learn.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• The primary goal of the student is to be a high achieving learner.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• It is the responsibility of the school to find appropriate and successful teaching techniques that positively affect the achievement of all students.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• The primary goal of the teacher is to facilitate the academic growth of all students.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Compliment staff members for their efforts to achieve school goals.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Provide an opportunity for teachers to demonstrate successful approaches and materials.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Recognize and reward teachers for student improvement.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Identify and reward outstanding student performance.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Monitoring instruction and conducting staff evaluations.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Establish an on-going, mutually agreed-upon supervision process at the school that goes beyond the required annual review. Be visible in the classrooms and discuss alternative instructional approaches.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— During teacher evaluations, include criteria to examine potential race and sex bias in teacher-student interactions.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Conduct observations and provide feedback to teachers on their teaching strategies, instructional materials and students' progress. Provide praise or constructive suggestions for improvement.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Use classroom observations to identify outstanding teachers and instructional techniques that work; to modify instructional techniques that do not work; and to redesign staff development programs so they reflect observed teacher needs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Supporting staff development that integrates equity concerns in each topic.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— With faculty members, set priorities for each year based on a comprehensive staff development needs assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Integrate equity-related staff development into regular faculty meetings, department meetings, and staff development programs throughout the year.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Through flexible scheduling allow school time for staff development programs and for development of multicultural approaches to the curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Encourage staff members to share successful instructional practices at faculty meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Invite experts to present instructional alternatives that positively affect student achievement of targeted populations. Presentations can be made at staff or department meetings or during professional days.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Develop a multidimensional evaluation system to review the effectiveness of staff development programs. The evaluation should assess change in knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as change in classroom performance in the direction of providing more equitable opportunities for all students.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

3. What administrative procedures encourage equity and excellence?

As school manager, the effective principal establishes administrative procedures that encourage both equity and excellence. The principal has a responsibility to establish the tone and the standards. This entails overseeing all aspects of the school experience which communicate expectations of excellence and equity. Administrative procedures should be developed to (1) monitor scheduling and grouping procedures, and (2) establish an orderly school climate.

In the first column, circle the appropriate numeral to indicate the extent to which you have succeeded in implementing the following goals. In column 2, circle the numeral which expresses your opinion on how important a priority for improvement you consider this to be.

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Review scheduling and grouping procedures to assure equity and excellence in educational programming.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Encourage students from all racial groups and both sexes to participate in all curricular and extracurricular activities. Develop and publicize policies and procedures to assure that no student is denied participation in extracurricular activities because of financial reasons or because of transportation limitations.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Prepare and disseminate a policy affirming a commitment to integrated education.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Review classroom enrollments to monitor the number of students by race and sex.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Develop procedures that eliminate tracking, e.g., heterogeneous stratified grouping.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Monitor enrollments in special education and gifted and talented programs for disproportionate representation of one racial group. If representation is disproportionate, establish a committee to review all identification procedures and to develop a plan to achieve appropriate representation.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— To ensure flexible, heterogeneous, integrated grouping *within* classes, expose teachers to a variety of instructional approaches.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Establishing an orderly school atmosphere.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Establish equitable rules of conduct and attendance for staff and students.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Form a committee to develop a school-wide disciplinary plan that clearly delineates appropriate and inappropriate school behavior and consequences. The committee should follow these steps: • draft plan • present draft of plan to total staff for reactions • incorporate suggestions • have total staff approve this version • disseminate to students and to parents for reactions • incorporate suggestions into the final plan • encourage teachers to conduct discussions about the plan with students	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Monitor disciplinary procedures to ensure equal and non-discriminatory application.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Keep accurate records and review data periodically for patterns indicating disproportionate disciplinary actions by race or sex.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— In faculty and department meetings, allow time for regular discussions of how to handle special disciplinary problems.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

4. How can a principal mobilize community resources to help maintain a positive school climate?

Research has indicated that cooperative relationships with parents are an important factor contributing to students' achievement. Parental support is a key to effective schools and to providing the support needed by principals and teachers. To gain community involvement that assists the school in meeting its goals, the principal should encourage teachers to communicate regularly with the parents and to develop a plan for ongoing parent involvement.

In the first column, circle the appropriate numeral to indicate the extent to which you have succeeded in implementing the following goals. In column 2, circle the numeral which expresses your opinion on how important a priority for improvement you consider this to be.

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Encouraging teachers to communicate with parents.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Work with teachers to review strategies that will make parents from all racial and ethnic groups feel welcome and comfortable at the school.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Be sure that teachers notify the parents or guardians of each child, regardless of race, when their child has a behavior or academic problem.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Encourage teachers to meet with all parents at a time and place that is convenient for the parents and to communicate regularly with all parents.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
• Designing a plan for ongoing parent involvement.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Convene a committee of faculty and parents proportionately representative of students from all racial and ethnic groups to develop a school plan for parent support designed to improve student achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Self-Assessment					Priority for Improvement				
	Very Little		Moderately		To a Great Extent	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Distribute the school plan and discuss it with parents in face-to-face meetings, providing opportunities for questions. To accommodate all parents, plan meetings at school and in the community at various hours. The principal and teacher representatives should attend all meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— To ensure reaching all parents, arrange for publicity about the school plan with local newspapers and radio/TV stations.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Send periodic reminders to parents about upcoming opportunities for parent participation as outlined in the school plan.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
— Recognize and reward parent participation.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Once the assessment has been completed, the principal can list those areas which were ranked 4 or 5 as most important for improvement. To experience success and effect change, a principal should select only one or two areas to focus on, concentrating energy and resources.

This process of assessment, data analysis, setting priorities and planning for change can be repeated with the entire staff of the school. When curriculum and approaches to discipline are developed and supported by the faculty of a school, students' achievement increases.

This booklet can thus be used as the basis for effective planning by the principal, for setting individual objectives and for establishing the school's goals for the upcoming year.

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